

She Never Knew Hubby Was Spying on the Double

Special to The Washington Post

LONDON, England, Oct. 11—The estranged third wife of master spy Harold (Kim) Philby knew her husband was a member of the British Intelligence Service, but never suspected that for 30 years he also was an agent for the Soviet Union.

Eleanor Philby, the American wife whom Philby, now living in Moscow, has apparently divorced, said in a copyrighted story in the London Observer that her husband probably was able to keep his dual role a secret because "one activity was a perfect cover for the other, and Kim's work for the Observer was good cover for both."

Philby went to Beirut as Middle East correspondent for the Observer and the Economist in 1956, after being cleared of allegations that he had tipped fellow spies Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean that British Intelligence was about to arrest them in 1951. While in Beirut, Philby met and married Eleanor. In January 1963, fearing exposure, he fled to Russia.

Mrs. Philby knew of her husband's continuing work for the British, as "it is common Intelligence practice for a wife to be told that her husband is doing secret work" to keep her from getting suspicious about his activities.

She knew nothing in advance, Mrs. Philby wrote, about her husband's defection to Moscow. For the next several months, she



ELEANOR PHILBY

... Moscow was the mystery.

was questioned by Intelligence officers of both Russia and the West about Philby's activities. She went to Moscow later that year to live with him.

"When I got to Moscow and really understood for the first time that Kim had been a dedicated agent for 30 years, I had to look at our relationship in a completely new way," she wrote. She stayed in Moscow with him for two years, but returned to Britain in 1965 and later settled in Ireland.

She found herself shut off from her former friends in London who, when she

tried to see them, "usually hesitated, making some kind of excuse, and that was that. Now when they read the whole story, perhaps they will understand how I felt."

The "whole story" is a book on which Mrs. Philby is collaborating with Patrick Seale, who succeeded Kim Philby as the Observer's Middle East correspondent and who was also the ghost-writer of the Observer article. The book was originally scheduled to be published next autumn, but a running battle between the Observer and the London

Sunday Times to beat each other into print with the Philby story has accelerated the timing, possibly to next spring or earlier.

Mrs. Philby described her marriage to Philby as "perfect in every way" even though "Kim shut me out of a whole side of his personality." She implied that she left him in 1965 because of his romance with the wife of Donald Maclean, who also lives in the small British "spy ghetto" in Moscow. (The most recent addition is

George Blake, who escaped last year from London's Wormwood Scrubs Prison, presumably with Soviet assistance, while serving a 42-year sentence for espionage).

"Kim's affair with Melinda Maclean started when I was still in Moscow two years ago," she said, adding this must inevitably have caused a breach between Philby and Maclean.

It was disclosed last week that Philby had divorced his wife and remarried Mrs. Maclean, an event which

Mrs. Philby said did not surprise her.

About half of Seale's book will be a description of Philby's life as double agent and journalist. The remainder is Mrs. Philby's account of her life with him in Beirut.

"One of my personal reasons for writing the book," she said, "was to work out in detail what had happened to me and to understand how I could have had such a full and intensely happy marriage with a man I now realize I didn't really know."